

IN THE CLAIMS:

1 1-3. (Canceled)

1 4. (Original) In a spectral ellipsometer, which includes a light incidence optical
2 system for achieving spot incidence of polarization light of multi-wavelengths onto a sample
3 surface and a detecting optical system for outputting information concerning the sample surface
4 based on an amount of change in elliptical polarization reflected by the sample surface, the
5 improvement comprising a prism polarizer employed in the light incidence optical system with a
6 curved light-incident surface and a curved light-outgoing surface that is orthogonal with respect
7 to a progressing direction of the respective direction of incident and outgoing light.

1 5-7. (Canceled)

1 8. (New) A method of optically determining the characteristics of a sample surface,
2 comprising;
3 providing a multi-wavelength light;
4 polarizing the multi-wavelength light including a spherical polarizing prism;
5 directing the polarized multi-wavelength light to focus at an oblique angle on a
6 single point on a sample surface;
7 measuring the reflected polarized light from the sample surface, and
8 determining the characterization from the change in polarization determined in the
9 measured light.

1 9. (New) The method of Claim 8, wherein the spherical polarizing prism has an
2 incident convex surface and an exiting concave surface.

1 10. (New) In a spectral ellipsometer having a source of multi-wavelength light, an
2 optical system for directing the light, and a detecting optical system for receiving light after
3 contact with a sample surface, the improvement comprising:

4 a spherical prism for receiving the multi-wavelength light directed from the
5 optical system and focusing the multiple wavelength light onto a single spot on the sample
6 surface.

1 11. (New) In a spectral ellipsometer having a source of multi-wavelength light, an
2 optical system for directing the light, and a detecting optical system for receiving light after
3 contact with a sample surface, the improvement comprising:

4 a polarizing prism with at least one curved surface for receiving the multi-
5 wavelength light directed from the optical system and focusing the multiple wavelength light
6 onto a single spot on the sample surface.